

*Subj.*

**What is claimed is:**

1. A method of incentivizing use of an exercise device, comprising:  
providing an exercise device connected to a network;  
receiving over the network usage information associated with a user's operation of the  
exercise device;

5 identifying a usage account associated with the user for storing usage points; and  
increasing a total of usage points stored in the usage account in response to the usage  
information.

10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the usage information includes the frequency  
with which the user operates the exercise device.

15 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the usage information includes the duration  
for which the user operates the exercise device.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the usage account is stored on a database  
accessible by the exercise device over the network.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the usage account is stored on a database  
stored on a storage device coupled to the exercise device.

20 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
providing a milestone award to the user when the total of usage points stored  
in the usage account exceeds a threshold value.

25 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
receiving a request from the user to redeem a number of the usage points stored in the  
usage account in exchange for a usage award.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

decreasing the total of usage points stored in the usage account by an amount corresponding to the redeemed number of usage points in response to the request.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the usage award includes merchandise or  
5 services.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein the usage award includes a discount on merchandise or services.

10 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the usage points include active usage points accruing based on use of the exercise device.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the usage points include lifetime usage points accruing based on the user's patronage of a health facility.

15 13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

providing an active milestone award to the user when the total of active usage points stored in the usage account exceeds a threshold value related to the operation of the exercise device; and

20 providing a lifetime milestone award to the user when the total of lifetime usage points stored in the usage account exceeds a threshold value related to the user's patronage of the health facility.

25 14. The method of claim 12, wherein the active usage points and lifetime usage points are differentially redeemable for merchandise or services.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the number of active milestone awards awarded varies, depending on the lifetime milestone awards achieved by the user.

30 16. The method of claim 1, wherein the usage information includes information measuring activities performed by the user on a console coupled to the exercise device.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein the usage points are differentially increased in response to the activities performed by the user on the console.

5 18. The method of claim 1, wherein the usage information includes a time of day at which the user operates the exercise device.

10 19. The method of claim 18, wherein the usage points are increased based on the time of day.

15 20. The method of claim 6, further comprising:  
providing notification information over a console coupled to the exercise device to notify the user when the total of usage points stored in the usage account approaches the threshold value.

20 21. The method of claim 7, further comprising:  
providing notification information over a console coupled to the exercise device to notify the user of available usage awards based on the total of usage points stored in the usage account.

25 22. A method of incentivizing use of an exercise device, comprising:  
providing an exercise device connected to a network;  
receiving over the network usage operation associated with a user's operation of the exercise device;  
identifying a usage account associated with the user for storing usage points;  
increasing a total of usage points stored in the usage account in response to the usage information; and  
providing a milestone award to the user when the total of usage points stored in the usage account exceeds a threshold value.

23. A computer program product embodied on a computer-readable medium for incentivizing use of an exercise device connected to a network, the program, comprising instructions operable to cause a programmable processor to:

5 receive over the network usage information associated with a user's operation of the exercise device;

identify a usage account associated with the user for storing usage points; and

increase a total of usage points stored in the usage account in response to the usage information.

10 24. The computer program of claim 23, wherein the usage information includes the frequency with which the user operates the exercise device.

15 25. The computer program of claim 23, wherein the usage information includes the duration for which the user operates the exercise device.

20 26. The computer program of claim 23, wherein the usage account is stored on a database accessible by the exercise device over the network.

27. The computer program of claim 23, wherein the usage account is stored on a 20 database stored on a storage device coupled to the exercise device.

28. The computer program of claim 23, further comprising instructions operable to cause a programmable processor to:

25 provide a milestone award to the user when the total of usage points stored in the usage account exceeds a threshold value.

29. The computer program of claim 23, further comprising instructions operable to cause a programmable processor to:

30 receive a request from the user to redeem a number of the usage points stored in the usage account in exchange for a usage award.

30. The computer program of claim 29, further comprising instructions operable to cause a programmable processor to:

decrease the total of usage points stored in the usage account by an amount corresponding to the redeemed number of usage points in response to the request.

5

31. The computer program of claim 29, wherein the usage award includes merchandise or services.

32. The computer program of claim 29, wherein the usage award includes a

10 discount on merchandise or services.

33. The computer program of claim 23, wherein the usage points include active usage points accruing based on use of the exercise device.

15 34. The computer program of claim 33, wherein the usage points include lifetime usage points accruing based on the user's patronage of a health facility.

35. The computer program of claim 34, further comprising instructions operable to cause a programmable processor to:

20 provide an active milestone award to the user when the total of active usage points stored in the usage account exceeds a threshold value related to the operation of the exercise device; and

25 provide a lifetime milestone award to the user when the total of lifetime usage points stored in the usage account exceeds a threshold value related to the user's patronage of the health facility.

36. The computer program of claim 34, wherein the active usage points and lifetime usage points are differentially redeemable for merchandise or services.

30 37. The computer program of claim 35, wherein the number of active milestone awards awarded varies, depending on the lifetime milestone awards achieved by the user.

38. The computer program of claim 23, wherein the usage information includes information measuring activities performed by the user on a console coupled to the exercise device.

5 39. The computer program of claim 38, wherein the usage points are differentially increased in response to the activities performed by the user on the console.

40. The computer program of claim 24, wherein the usage information includes a time of day at which the user operates the exercise device.

10

41. The computer program of claim 40, wherein the usage points are increased based on the time of day.

15

42. The computer program of claim 28, further comprising instructions operable to cause a programmable processor to:  
provide notification information over a console coupled to the exercise device to notify the user when the total of usage points stored in the usage account approaches the threshold value.

20

43. The computer program of claim 29, further comprising instructions operable to cause a programmable processor to:

provide notification information over a console coupled to the exercise device to notify the user of available usage awards based on the total of usage points stored in the usage account.